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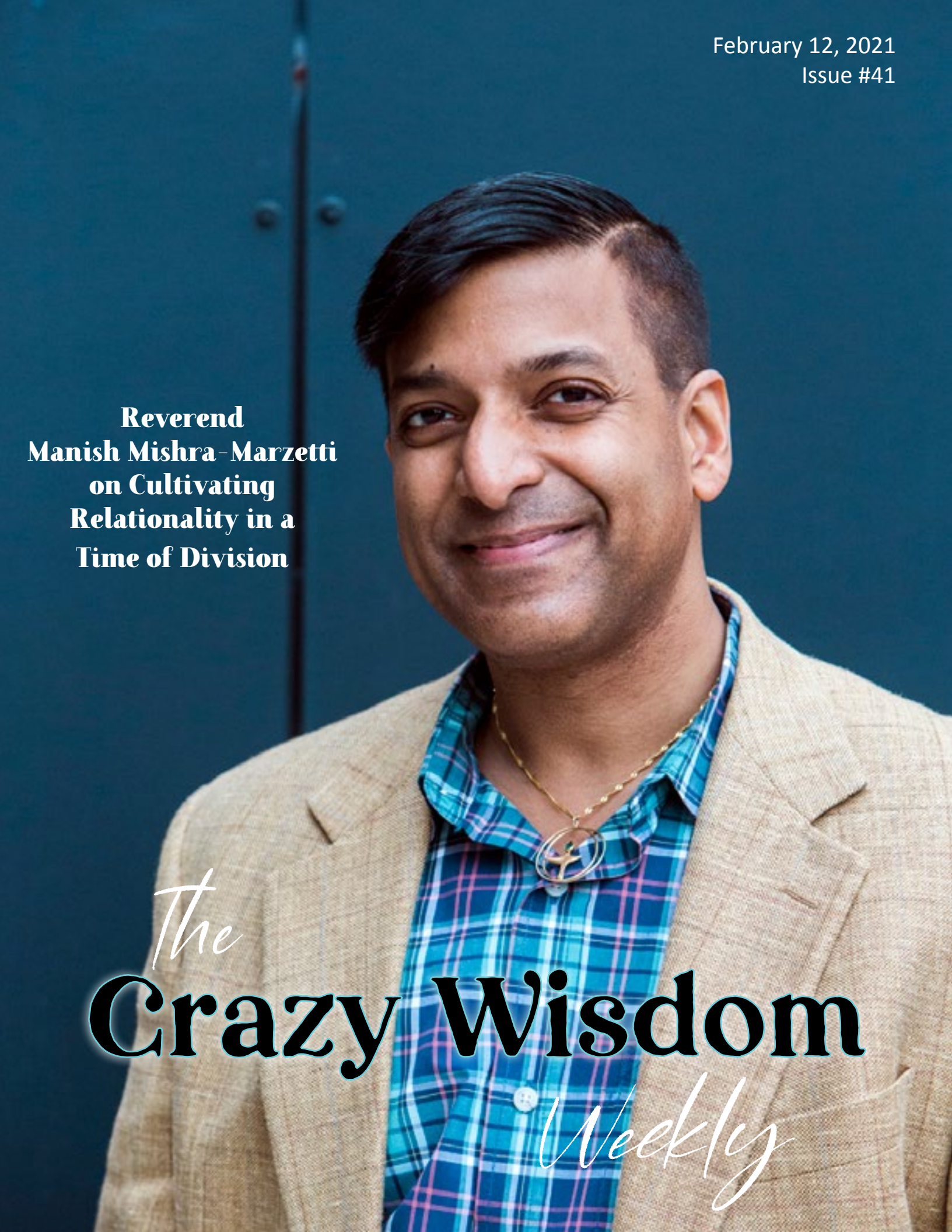

Reverend Manish Mishra-Marzetti on Cultivating Relationality in a Time of Division

The Crazy Wisdom Weekly

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The Crazy Wisdom Weekly

The Crazy Wisdom Weekly is looking for your submissions!

We want short stories, personal essays, gardening tips, reflections on life, your best recipies, or awesome summer wildlife or nature photos! Have a great joke? Send it in! We are also looking to feature local authors, writers, musicians, craftspeople, and artists. Have a great idea for a short article? Send in your article pitch! Submissions should be sent to: Jennifer@crazywisdom.net. Please put CW Weekly submission in the subject line. Articles should be no more than 1000 words.

We look forward to seeing your submissions!

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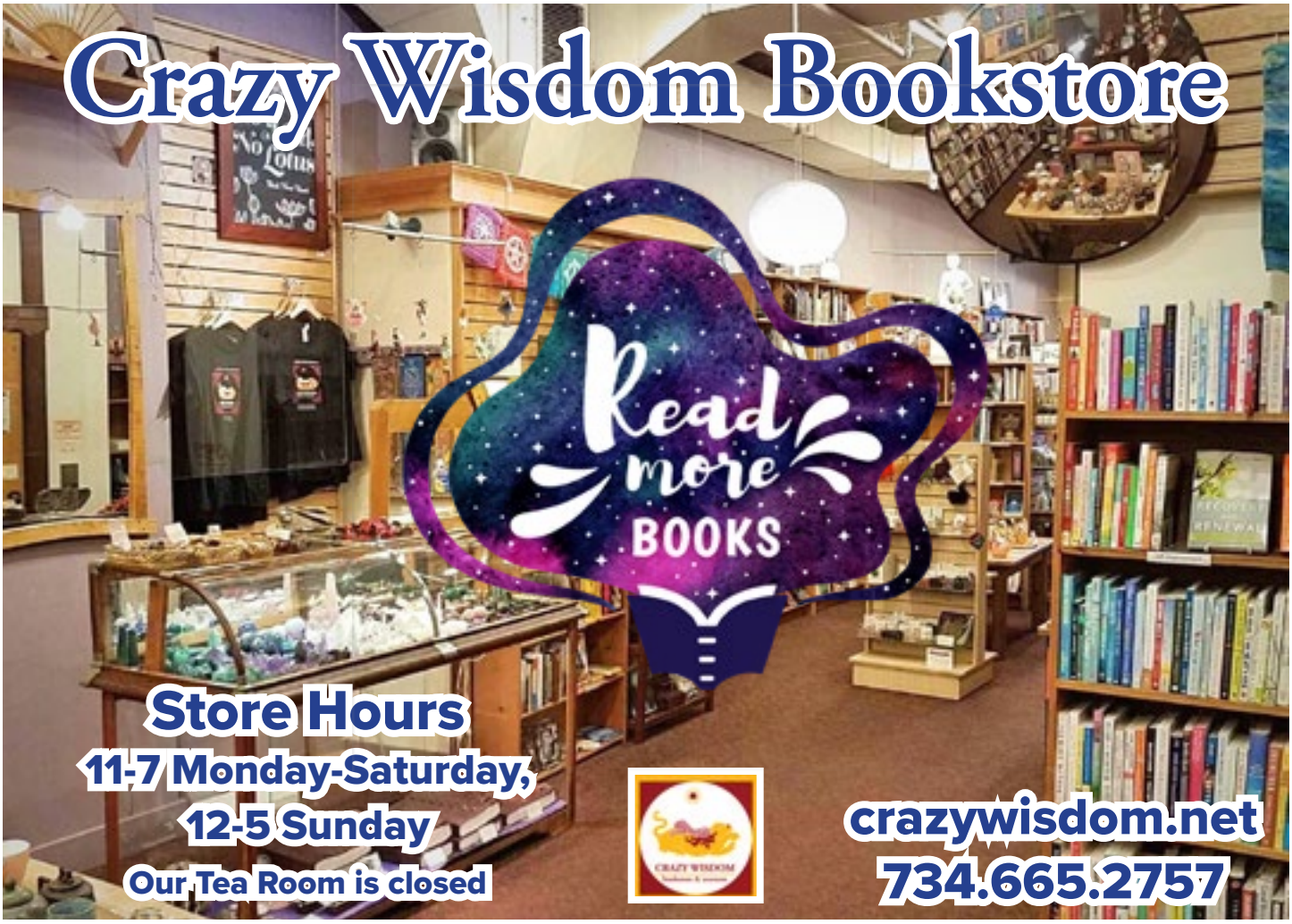

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Please read our parent publication, *The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*. You can find online archives on our website, crazywisdomjournal.com. *The Crazy Wisdom Journal* has been published three times a year since 1995.

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Thank you to our contributors for this issue:

Reverend Manish Mishra-Marzetti
Billy Kirst
Diane Majeske
Austeen Freeman
Peter Szatmary
Kim Gray
Carol Karr
Jennifer Carson
Bill Zirinsky

Word of the Week:

Mudita

Taking delight in the happiness of others.

Born during the pandemic, *The Crazy Wisdom Weekly* seeks to represent the voices of our community in a timely and entertaining manner. We welcome articles, interviews, recipes, wisdom, personal essays, breathing exercises, beautiful art and photos, favorite places for socially distant walks, news of your pets, or musings on current events. Send your submission to Jennifer@crazywisdom.net.

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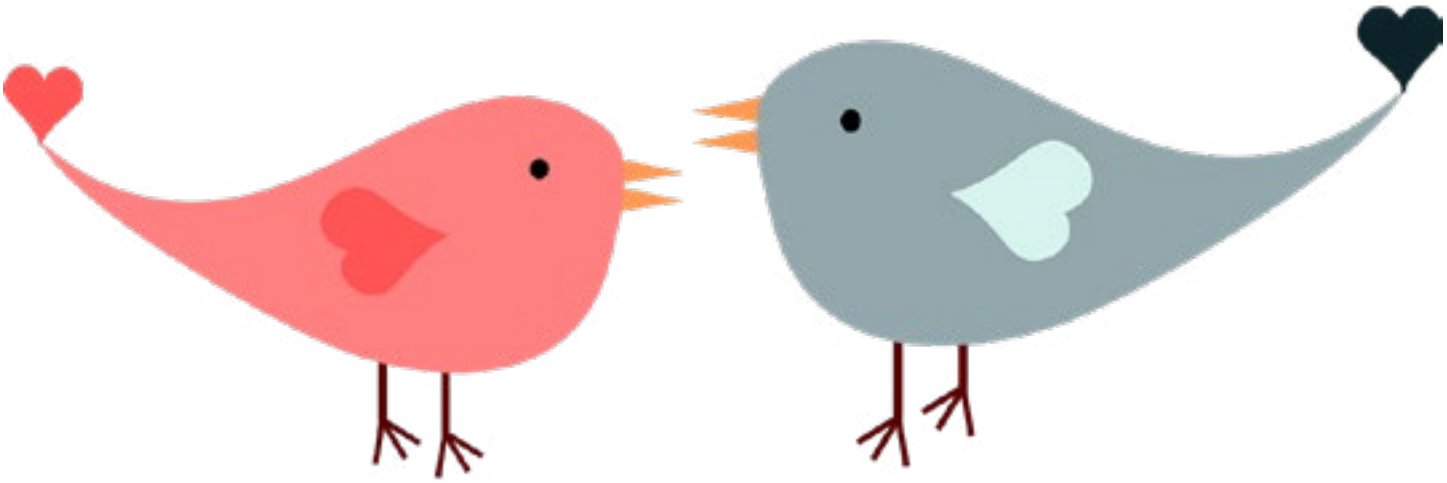
CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS IN A TIME OF DIVISION



By Reverend Manish Mishra-Marzetti

Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti is the Senior Minister at the First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor.

A flash of insight hit me recently. I was watching my six-year-old daughter–a highly intuitive, caring, and creative type–engaged in art. As I did so, I also held the realization that within my lifetime what high schoolers are expected to know and accomplish in the fields of math and science has not only increased in difficulty, but the complexity of the material that is taught has also shifted to younger and younger ages.

I found myself pondering why. If my daughter wants to study creative art or dance, or ethics and religion, at one of my alma maters (Harvard), she will have to demonstrate not just passing honors-level Chemistry and Calculus but attaining the highest possible grades in those classes in order to gain admission. This doesn't make any sense. Why would we, as a society, require a creative arts student to excel in literally every academic area as a prerequisite for a shot at deepening their innate gifts at a top university? Engineering students are not required to submit art or dance portfolios in order to get into Harvard, yet my daughter would have to excel at advanced mathematics.

Don't get me wrong. Every field of inquiry is worthy of the best human expression that we are capable of; in my opinion, no field of study or inquiry is inherently superior to any other. They all hold value. And, yet, the competitive processes that the youth of our society must go through values some skills and forms of knowledge more highly than others. Many of our teens spend months, if not even years, cramming math concepts and complex vocabulary in advance of taking the SAT. Our Enlightenment-based Western society—with all the deep, profound benefits of being such—has privileged empirically testable knowledge over other sources of wisdom and other critical human skills. Metrics have become the measure of our children. After 12-plus years of formal education in our society, we test for advanced math concepts and the complexity of their vocabulary. We do not test or measure whether they are good human beings; we do not test or apply metrics to their capacity to engage in complex and demanding human relationships; we do not quantify their morality or ethicality; we don't assess emotional maturity or empathy. Something is off.

With this in mind, is it any wonder that we have a crisis of relationality in our nation? After diligently equipping our children to outperform one another in a narrow number of ways—which becomes the primary focus of their young lives and formal education—it is left to congregations, to community centers, to social groups of various kinds, to teach children how to be in complex relationship with one another—*if that*. By and large, my experience is that even in relationally oriented institutions, very few offer classes or training in how to engage well in the most fundamental of human needs: how to be in healthy, mutually meaningful relationship with one another. It is as if, *en masse*, we have collectively decided that these skills are somehow acquired by osmosis. And, if they are not learned by osmosis, we wait until someone 'screws up really bad' (gets into difficulty with their community, at their workplace, or in their personal relationships) and then we enact a disciplinary model: punitive action must be taken, and boundaries put in place.

Indeed, at times, healthy boundaries and accountability are needed. But why do we, as a society, make almost no effort to teach, not just the fundamentals of human relationship, but the more advanced skills related to: what do we do when we screw up? How are we present to one another across deeply held differences? What should we do in the midst of volatile conflict? How do we 'show up' in meaningful ways for the diversity that we claim to value and constantly stumble over? What do we do with our own subjectivity and reactivity in the midst of such critical relational needs?

We classify these non-optional human skills as being part of the 'implicit curriculum'—surely, we assume, our very best teachers

and mentors are showing us how to do all these things from a young age. I ask, drawing on what? Utilizing what structures? With what knowledge and training? When we assume the teaching is everywhere—that it is ubiquitously implicit—it can wind up being nowhere, or only selectively available, in too few spaces. We have developed an empirically focused, metric-fluent society with a social fabric that is frayed, tattered, and, at times, toxic.

This is a spiritual crisis, for 'spirit' (however we choose to understand it) is ultimately about interconnectedness, interdependence, and the connective tissue invisibly binding everything and everyone to each other. When we are struggling with how to relate to one another—how to even care about one another—in one of the wealthiest nations in the history of planet Earth, a nation in which no one need ever starve or sleep without a roof over their head, and yet people do—there is a profound crisis of disconnection. When it feels 'safer' to only be among those who almost exclusively think like 'us'—cutting off neighbors, family members, community members, and co-workers who hold divergent needs and experiences—we are deepening that disconnection, not healing it or working with it. At every turn, I hear people say, "I want to step into these needs, these critical needs of our time. I just don't know how," and then many resume the status quo patterns of life that got us here in the first place. We should be honest with ourselves. Do we ***really*** want to heal and work with the intense social divisions within our society? If so, we must be open to the possibility that many, many deeply embedded assumptions related to how our society is organized and works may be part of the problem. Indeed, as I have sought to highlight here, our very epistemology (our sense of what knowledge is, and what kinds of knowledge 'matter') might be a part of the problem. And if our epistemology is faulty, wouldn't that by necessity mean that a whole lot more, that is grounded and based on that epistemology, might also be skewed?

Openness to, and non-defensiveness toward, the breadth and depth of what might not be serving us well as human beings is the first step, and arguably the largest, most critical one. From a place of openness many things are possible. It becomes possible to practice deepening our relational skills within community—perhaps first with those who mostly think like us. It becomes possible to say, "I don't understand this aspect of who you are, or your views, or your life experience. Are you open to sharing more?" It becomes possible to say, "Oh my gosh, I really hurt you. I wasn't trying to do that, but I see the impact that I have had, and I am sorry. Can we explore what we might do differently or better together?" Then, through our authentic, loving presence with one another, we might arrive at, "Wow, I don't agree with your perspective on that at all, but I love you and you matter to me. Are you open to hearing my different take/experience, maybe without either of us 'needing' to change the other?"

These sound like small steps, baby steps—even to me, as I write these words. Yet, the frayed connective tissue of our society must first be strengthened locally, wherever we are, with whichever groups of people we are most immediately connected to. Only as tissue gets stronger, as it first heals and then grows, can it bear the harder and more weighty loads. Social, civic, and communal healing requires more than convalescence, or worse, hiding in cliques of uniformity. It requires building muscle, in this case a spiritual-relational muscle. This muscle, this connective tissue, requires challenging and transforming the faulty assumptions that have been shredding it; it requires practice with relational skills that many of us were never taught and some of us may feel embarrassed not to have or intimidated in learning; it requires patience and grounding in love, love, and then even more love. We are already—each and every one of us—siblings to one another and to all that exists at the level of 'spirit,' essence, the ontological nature of 'all that is.' We just need to start behaving like we really get that. The good news is that intentional practice and learning—not osmosis—can get us there.

May we each be the healing that our world needs.

Adapt Ecology: Bringing Native Plants Back to Your Yard

By Billy Kirst

In 2009, we moved into our first home and promptly plowed our front lawn. This was the beginning of our personal journey into ecological restoration at home. Billy had worked for years in the field of ecological restoration, so the idea of laying waste to our "pristine" front lawn and planting it to natives and vegetables seemed obvious to him. Nell, on the other hand, was a bit more skeptical. She had a more conventional aesthetic, and while she wanted a garden, she also wanted to make sure we were respectful new neighbors.

As our project expanded (filled in with new species), grew, and changed over the next decade, our understanding of it and its unique role in our neighborhood changed as well. It started off innocently enough, meeting neighbors as we worked compost into the veggie garden or planted a new flat of sedges in the "prairie" border. Over the years, though, our relationships with our neighbors deepened as we spent more time talking and less time planting. Over-the-fence encounters transformed into opportunities to share strawberries and raspberries, tell stories and just spend time together. The abundance of seedling native plants allowed us to begin yearly sales with the proceeds going toward the purchase of new species. As the garden continued to grow, so did our community. Nell now was less concerned about our garden offending our neighbors as she saw instead how it helped us connect more deeply with them.

In some ways, it seems obvious that the outdoors, or the world as a whole, is a shared resource. But while this idea is not necessarily novel, the experience of it can be downright stunning. Our front yard had transformed from a flat monoculture of fescue to a lush oasis of food and flowers, birds and butterflies. In this transformation, it had become a garden of, and for, our neighborhood. Every time we walked out the front door, we understood that our yard was a shared resource. "Our" front yard truly belonged to each and every species that called it home. It belonged to our neighbors who enjoyed the scent of the American plum. It belonged to the parents dropping their children off at school, and to those same children who marveled at its changing chorus of flowers through the seasons on their way home. We saw that it was our responsibility to keep that community, here in our front yard, healthy.

During this time, Billy began building and designing gardens part-time. As he came to see restoration as a moral imperative in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss, he became increasingly frustrated with the financial barriers people faced when trying to make ecologically wise landscaping choices. Native plantings do require expertise—people to grow local genotype plants and design and plant ecologically appropriate gardens— and experts need to get paid for the value of their services. This presented a major dilemma. To stem the loss of biodiversity and to have any chance of solving climate change, everyone needs to be involved. We also started to see the importance of community building in the face of new political,

economic, and cultural changes happening over the last several years. Now, more than ever, we need open, inclusive, respectful, and trusting communities.

In the fall of 2019 we talked about a shared vision for an organization that could begin to address these ecological and community issues through shared time, work, money, and expertise. We knew we had the passion to get the organization started, and having been part of the southeast Michigan community for 15 years, we were confident that this community is what we needed to build this organization and keep it going—we would co-create it together.

We aimed to make ecological restoration through native plant and edible perennial gardening accessible to anyone, free of charge, and regardless of gardening experience. It was also important to us to involve anyone who wanted to join, especially those whom might not have access to a garden of their own, or who had already planted their entire lot. We decided that we would work to train a base of volunteers who would help prepare, plant, and maintain these gardens. For those who wanted to help but had no time or interest in getting outside, we offered the opportunity to support our project financially through monthly donations on Patreon.

In our first year, one of our main goals was to engage a core group of volunteers to help with the work and spread the message of Adapt. But when the seriousness and scope of the Covid-19 pandemic became clear, we decided to shelve any ideas of working closely with volunteers. At first this seemed like it would completely undermine our core philosophy and plans, but we already had donations coming in and we were not about to disappoint those who wanted to see us plant some gardens. So Billy, with the help of our two recently de-schooled children, began planting the gardens on his own. The summer proved wildly successful, with Adapt installing 22 gardens, providing kits and instructions for 35 gardens, and receiving donations from 72 different individuals including more than 50 who have become sustaining contributors on Patreon.

The relative ease of creating these gardens, the very positive feedback from homeowners, and the likelihood of continued physical distancing all helped spark a new idea for the 2021 growing season. Could we bring this idea of free gardens to more communities around Michigan? The answer, coming in the form of seven highly committed and knowledgeable Adapt volunteer leaders, was a resounding “yes!”. In addition to planting more gardens in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti this year, we will be bringing gardens to Grand Rapids, Manistee, Chelsea, and Canton. Our goal is to at least double the effort we accomplished last year. And with your help, we hope to double that effort again in 2022.

We call ourselves “Adapt” because we acknowledge that we have created a world that is undergoing massive change and we need to change and adapt to our new reality. We need to build, right now, the future that we want to see. We call ourselves “Community Supported Ecology” in an acknowledgement that we all need to come together, in whatever way we can, to support our communal ecological reality: that this world we live in is a shared home, and a shared resource.

Community comes in many forms these days. In October, our family made the bittersweet decision to move, as we made

Adapt Ecology continued

a 2-year commitment away from southeast Michigan.* Like many of you, we have remained connected to our loved ones and communities through phone calls, messages, and video conferences. We invite you to join our Adapt community in any way you can: as a donor, as a volunteer (hopefully someday soon in person again!), as someone who would like a garden in their yard, as a member of our online community. Maybe you will even join as a future Adapt leader, bringing free gardens to your neighborhood, restoring biodiversity and ecological function, increasing food security, bringing beauty to all passersby, and, most importantly, strengthening your local community around restoration and regeneration.

You can find out more about Adapt Ecology on their Facebook page @adaptecology or support their native planting and education efforts through their Patreon page. Visit their website at adaptecology.org

*Nell and William made a 2-year commitment for an incredible opportunity in New Zealand. While we are away, we are continuing the organizational work of Adapt while our seven wonderful volunteer leaders are taking the lead on plantings and local community engagement.

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Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series

hosted by
Ed Morin, David Jibson, and Rainey Lamey

Second and Fourth Wednesday of each month, 7-9 p.m.

Until further notice, all sessions are virtual and accessible through Zoom.

Email cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com for Zoom link

Second Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.: Poetry Workshop. All writers welcome to share and discuss their poetry and short fiction. Sign-up for new participants begins 6:45 p.m.

Fourth Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.: Featured Reader(s) for 50 minutes. Open Mic reading for up to 1 hour. All writers welcome to share their own or other favorite poetry.

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series Featured readers

January 27 - Hedy Habra is a polyglot essayist and artist whose third book of poems, *The Taste of the Earth*, won the Silver Nautilus Award. *Tea in Heliopolis* won the USA Best Book Award and *Under Brushstrokes* was finalist for the International Book Award. She has lived in Egypt, Brussels, and now Kalamazoo. Her website is hedyhabra.com

February 24 - Patricia Hooper is author of *Separate Flights* and *Wild Persistence*—the most recent of her five books of poetry. Her poems have appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly, Poetry,* and *Kenyon Review*, and have won six major awards. She is a U. of Michigan alumna and now lives in Gastonia, North Carolina.

February 24 - Dannye Romine Powell, newspaper editor and author of *In the Sunroom with Raymond Carver* and four other poetry collections, often depicts troubles with close relatives. She has published in *Ploughshares*, *Paris Review*, and *Poetry*. She once occupied the former bedroom of Sylvia Plath during a residency at the Yaddo Foundation's mansion.

March 24 - Ken Meisel, is a psychotherapist and author of eight books of poetry. With tender, grave empathy, *Our Common Souls: New & Selected Poems of Detroit* traces the conflicted searches for hope, sense of connection to place, and material and social problems embedded in the landscape of his deindustrialized city.

March 24 - Jeff Vande Zande has published four novels including *American Poet*, which won a Michigan Notable Book Award from the Library of Michigan. His story collections are *Emergency Stopping*, *Threatened Species*, and *The Neighborhood Division*. He is also a film maker, teaches at Delta College, and has a blog at www.authorjeffvandezande.blogspot.com

April 28 – Celebrate National Poetry Month!
The peer-to-peer writers workshop of the Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle, which meets on the second Wednesday of each month, read selections of their work. Featured readers: Joseph Kelty, David Jibson, Edward Morin, Rainey Lamey, Lissa Perrin, Gregory Mahr, Dana Dever, and others.

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle
The Poetry Series is open to all. There is never a charge.
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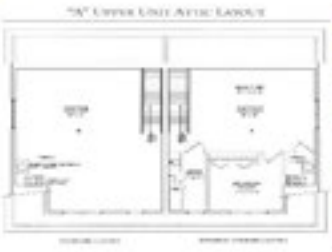

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OUT OF MY *Comfort Zone*

From Issue #76, Winter 2021

By Diane Majeske

Crazy Wisdom Journal asked a number of leaders in southeastern Michigan's conscious living community to reflect upon times in their lives that they've left their comfort zones to venture out in new ways. In the distant past or much more recently, we asked, what did you do, what inspired you, did it change you, inside or outside, big or little? Did you attend a new class, take an adventurous trip, go skydiving, stretch beyond a long entrenched boundary, start a new relationship or end an old one, take a leap, retire, join the Peace Corps, go on a night trek in the wilderness, or just do something way out of your ordinary?

Ellen Sapper retired from 39 years as a high school English teacher and guidance counselor, and currently has a private practice in college preparation and educational consulting. She holds master's degrees in communication, and guidance and counseling, as well as bachelor's degrees in comparative literature and social sciences.

She is a lifelong seeker of enhanced psychological and spiritual growth, and has participated in The Planned Change Internship in organizational development, EST and The Forum, group therapy, Trails CBT training, Tavistock-style Group Relations conferences at Northwestern, Rosh Hodesh circles, psychoanalytic teachings, women's growth groups, and workshops in comparative spiritualities based on Carl Jung's teaching and transpersonal psychology. She has also been involved with the Siddha Yoga, Kashi Nivas, and Kirtan communities, the Diamond Heart path, and vision quests with The Deer Tribe Metis Medicine Society. For the past 16 years, she has been engaged in the Spiritual Guidance Wisdom School programs of Atum O'Kane. She is regularly involved in spiritually-oriented pilgrimages to such places as India, Andalusia, Assisi, Morocco, and Poland, among others.

I had an awakening in 1974 that propelled me into an Indian tradition of Kashmir Shaivism, a non-dualistic philosophy from India. I meditated and chanted mantras happily for many years, though eventually wanted more grounding in what I'd call an "Earth tradition." New psychological and spiritual challenges were part of my comfort zone in the 1970's and beyond, or so I thought, until I signed up for The Warrior's Retreat in California with a shaman-medicine man who taught in the Twisted Hair tradition. The brochure touted learning ten different martial arts, psychological warfare, healing through sweat lodge ceremonies, and learning to live in balance in the natural world. All this sounded good to me in the mid-1980's, to balance the teachings from the Indian Guru with the teachings from Native American Indians in the shamanic tradition.

What I did not realize was that this particular retreat would be run in a quasi-militaristic fashion. The shaman's purpose was to teach the hippies as well as the Vietnam vets strength of body and spirit, to know the enemy and know yourself, to prepare for what he said would be the future terrorists who would not care if we put a flower in their gun barrels. Hence, we were divided into companies and platoons, donned fatigues, learned to shoot paintball guns, to combat attackers with jujitsu and tai-chi moves, eat foraged plants, and outwit the enemy. From before sunrise until after midnight, we alternately froze and baked in the sun and moon of the Tehachapi Mountains, crawling on our stomachs through brush to avoid the enemy, camping, and hoping for a moment to eat what little food we brought. I was not prepared for any of this. I wanted to become more grounded after years of living in the world of "everything is unified consciousness," yet learning self-defense against male attackers I might meet on the streets of L.A. or during a battle with the terrorists, wasn't what I had in mind.

Still, with an eighteen-day retreat, and nowhere to retreat to, I persisted. At age 36, I was taught to kick and punch where it hurts, and to aim a paintball gun to destroy my opponent, all while nearly starving in the heat of the mountainous desert of southern California. After the first paintball "war," a week into the retreat, we were told that the next week it would no longer be a "children's war" (a simple paintball game of three hours), but that we needed to be prepared for real terrorists, who someday would be attacking us near home, or at home. We participants prepared tobacco and passed a pipe, sending prayers to the heavens that the next war would be cancelled.

Our shaman teacher brought us together under the stars to tell us the "adult war" the following week would have himself and others as "secret terrorists among friends." We could not just get hit and out, as in normal paintball rules, but we would have to meditate under the tree and "reincarnate" to enter the game again, either as a peace-lover or terrorist, thus confusing who was on which side of the battle. By the time the dawn to midnight "game" was over, we had been double-crossed by our chosen leaders who turned into "terrorists." The woman dressed as a grandmother pulled her paintball gun out of her goody basket and smiled wryly as she splattered her followers with paintballs. We were confused, and exhausted, by a fake war meant to mirror the feelings of what it might be like to become disoriented, even when supposedly prepared through mental and physical preparation during the weeks of the retreat. We ended the day with our shaman explaining the trials of war and then steamy healing sweat-lodges, in preparation for the upcoming finale of a self-defense exhibition against fake attackers brought in from L.A. and the culminating Harmonic Convergence, where the planets aligned for the world's first synchronized global peace meditation in August of 1987.

Some folks had left the retreat in disgust at the militaristic nature of the program. I stayed, weary, having no way to get home from the desolate mountain. Still not fully comfortable with fighting, with or without weapons, I dressed in my combat clothing for the martial arts extravaganza. We gathered on mats under a makeshift tent, the women divided into groups of six, while the men sat around the outer edge of the tent, watching, awaiting the big guys from L.A. When it was my turn, I stood nervously, in the middle of the circle, but there was no big guy, only the Qigong instructor, filling in as too few big guys showed up. Each circle of women was told to go all out on these men, who were padded and wearing goggles and ready to be taken down. But not my guy. He was a martial artist himself and had his own idea of how to proceed. I was the second in my circle attacked. I kicked and grabbed and elbowed and successfully brought him down. But as I proudly returned to the circle, he grabbed me a second time! I wasn't alert but came to my senses and went for his knees. Victory!—until the third unprecedented attack, at which point I fell backward, twisting my leg. I couldn't stand, nor stop the pain.

We had signed releases that we were responsible for our own well-being. A tanned, bare-chested man came up to me wearing a pouch of needles and offered acupuncture. Others offered, or should I say, in the way of spiritual emergency medicine, did crystal healings on all parts of my body. The concern lasted minutes. Then, the extravaganza was over, and everyone went to the next activity while I lay on the mat unable to move, miserable, and lonely in the heat of the day.
Eventually, a friend carted up the sandy mountain to my tent, where I lay in pain, contemplating the inner lesson of my predicament for a few days. The harmonic convergence came with hundreds of hopeful aspirants drumming and chanting through the night, but no planet alignment healed my leg. I begged a woman with a car to take me to a clinic in Bakersfield where I was x-rayed, handed an envelope with the x-ray, and days later, I was taken to the UCLA hospital. When the doctor clipped the x-rays to the light-board, he suggested, "Perhaps you were hit with a hammer about three weeks ago? Your leg is fractured but it is healing nicely." I didn't tell him I was attacked by a Qigong master but did tell him it happened only three days ago, and that I had no medical treatment except acupuncture. I left out the crystal healing. Soon, all the doctors in the ER were looking at the x-ray and saying, "Acupuncture? acupuncture?!" Hmmm, I thought, maybe it did help. They put on a soft cast, and off I went to continue the healing journey of body, mind, and spirit.

It was an important experience to come into my body after many years in more of a mind-based spirituality. Now older, I do prefer a more serene spiritual practice, but that retreat awakened my sensibility to the importance of awareness of my physical being and the threat of terrorists long before the shaman's prediction came to pass on our shores. I will always remember the shaman saying, "They won't care if you stick flowers in their guns."

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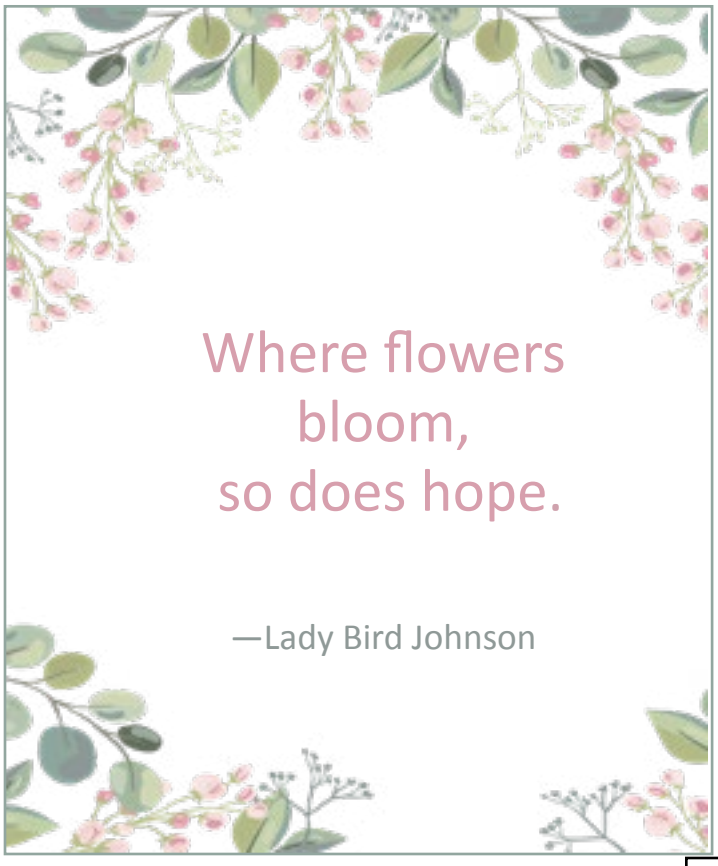

Lake Superior State University's 50th Anniversary of Its Department of Natural Unicorns:

Show Love to the Legendary Horned Creatures By Not Hunting Them on Valentine's Day

Sault Ste. Marie, MI — The Department of Natural Unicorns at Lake Superior State University celebrates its 50th anniversary with a wink alert: feel free to devour chocolate delectables, arrange rose bouquets, and pen poetic tributes on Valentine's Day—but do not, under any circumstances, hunt unicorns on Feb. 14.

After all, Valentine's Day signifies love, and because just about everyone adores the legendary horned creatures, the Department of Natural Unicorns is issuing a friendly reminder that a brief halt of the hunt protects the enduring abracadabra of the population. In other words, while omnipresent in hearts and minds, unicorns remain elusive otherwise, and ceasing the quest on this one heartfelt day helps prevent the rare commodities from going extinct.

"A half-century ago, Lake Superior State University smiled as it established one of the most fantastic branches of pursuit in all of higher education: the Department of Natural Unicorns. Over the decades, countless questers at LSSU, across the U.S., and around the world have not only embraced the unique search but also suspended their affectionate trail on Valentine's Day as a further gesture of endearment toward the prized figures," said Game Warden of the Department of Natural Unicorns, Peter Szatmary, who also doubles as executive director of marketing and communications at LSSU. "Unicorn hunters understand the importance of the 24-hour pause in the fabulous chase just as they know that questing hours normally run day and night except when the Tooth Fairy or Santa Claus is around because there's only so much magic available at one time."

The late W.T. (Bill) Rabe, known for clever PR stunts when working as a Detroit-area publicist, founded the Unicorn Hunters in 1971 shortly after being hired as LSSU's director of public relations. Assisted by Professors of English Peter Thomas, John McCabe, John Stevens, and others, Rabe envisioned the Unicorn Hunters as one tongue-in-cheek way to garner more publicity for LSSU, which had just established itself as an independent school after being a branch of what is now Michigan Technological University. The Unicorn Hunters accumulated all sorts of positive attention over the years from media and devotees alike until LSSU's Unicorn Hunters retired with Rabe in 1987. The university continues to grant unicorn hunting licenses, currently free of charge, to anyone who wants one through its idiosyncratic Department of Natural Unicorns—so long as applicants follow the "specifications, rules, and misinterpretations" of enclosed regulations, as the license puts it.

"For instance," explained Szatmary, "maybe through zoological, geographical, and metaphysical assessments, the Department of Natural Unicorns determined that questing territories span enchanted forests, earth, outer space, and imagination. Recommended supplies for unicorn questers include tools such as curry combs and pinking shears plus techniques such as sweet talk and iambic pentameter, the latter being optional. And Mordred red and Gawain green are the best colors for questing uniforms, although any shade of purple works well, too."

Unicorn license holders pay no dues and attend no meetings. Questers must be nice to people and unicorns alike—and, upon gaining entry to this special club, send a photo of themselves displaying their hallowed permit to LSSU.

Under Rabe, the original Unicorn Hunters made the news often for other serious play that also continues to this day and has been spun off into separate happenings. In 1976, they began publishing an annual waggish Banished Words List against misuse, overuse, and uselessness of the English language. This yearly compendium has become a worldwide phenomenon in the intervening decades. And an annual Snowman Burning has occurred at LSSU on the first day of spring since 1971—because of the voluminous snowfall in the Eastern Upper Peninsula—to the delight of campus and community.

"We remain as proud of our singular traditions as we do of our signature programs," said LSSU President Dr. Rodney S. Hanley. "The Upper Peninsula is a wondrous place ideally suited for hunting unicorns. Everywhere else is, too, for that matter. But not on Valentine's Day. For 50 years, the young and the young-at-heart from near and far have received licenses from our Department of Natural Unicorns while also honoring this kindly moratorium. As our bylaws, history, lore, myths, and whimsy stipulate, all of us must ensure that unicorn herds remain at least five per square dream."

For more information about LSSU's Unicorn Hunters and to request a license, go online to lssu.edu/unicornhunters.

Unicorn Questing Regulations

Adapted from the original bylaws, history, lore, myths, and whimsy by Mike Gendzwill

The Department of Natural Unicorns (DNU) of the Unicorn Hunters at Lake Superior State University enforces the following edicts:

Questing Territories

- Enchanted forests
- Earth
- Outer space
- Imagination

Questing Season

- All days of the year except Valentine's Day. No unicorn pursuit allowed during the 24 consecutive hours of love.
- Bow-and-arrow season runs the first week of October. Rubber-tipped arrows only.

Questing Hours

Day or night except when the Tooth Fairy or Santa Claus is around. There's only so much magic available at one time.

Bag Limits

- One unicorn per month. A success ratio higher than this often results in a form of euphoria, which sometimes requires a mental truss, which is also rare to come by.
- Female unicorns cannot be taken. Since no one has ever sighted a female unicorn, it is believed that males reproduce asexually.

Banded Unicorns

The DNU may have banded some unicorns to indicate age and aesthetics. Upon taking a banded unicorn, questers must send the band to us.

Questing Kit

We recommend that unicorn questers bring the following supplies:

- Serious intent
- General levity
- Sweet talk
- Refreshing beverages: flask of cognac for adults, juice box for children, bottle of medieval potion for unicorns
- Curry comb
- Pinking shears
- Nail clipper (with file)
- Hoof and horn trimmer
- Hoof and horn polish
- Ribbons
- Arthurian legend books and/or works by Chaucer
- Iambic pentameter (optional)

A Note For Grown-Ups Only (No Kids Allowed!) About Unicorn Bait

The only legal unicorn bait is a virgin. While not illegal to use simulated virgins, such practice is definitely not cricket, as any student of Arthurian legend knows.

Questing Uniforms

Garb must be tailored individually. We recommend the colors **Mordred red** or **Gawain green**, depending on whether you're chasing the unicorn or vice versa. Then again, we're partial to **purple**—and, come to think of it, all colors.

License

We also consider this activity a privilege and an honor. In the event that unicorn herds diminish to numbers smaller than five per square dream, a drawing will be held to determine license holders.

Equal Opportunity

Anyone and everyone prepared to join the quest will be issued a unicorn license so long as potential members:

- Follow the above
- Pay no dues
- Attend no meetings
- Are nice to people and unicorns alike
- Understand that in 1977, due to public concern over then-dwindling unicorn herds, we changed the word "hunt" to "quest" on the license while retaining the original title of the organization because we thought that was fair

- Travel back in time to 1971 to thank the DNU creators: Bill Rabe, director of public relations, and English professors Peter Thomas, John McCabe, and John Stevens. Among many other efforts from the 1970s to garner more publicity for LSSU: hosting a Snowman Burning on the first day of spring to bid goodbye to winter (1971) and compiling at the end of the year a tongue-in-cheek Banished Words List as a safeguard against misuse, overuse, and uselessness of the English language (1976)—traditions still practiced today—and publishing a campus literary quarterly, *The Woods-Runner*.
- And, most importantly, upon receipt of membership into this special club, send us a color photo of the unicorn quester displaying the hallowed permit.

QUESTING UNICORN LICENSE
GOOD ON PLANET EARTH · OUTER SPACE · IMAGINATION · ENCHANTED FORESTS
IN UNICORNS WE TRUST
OFFICIAL SEAL

- The following are optional:
  - Wearing wonderful unicorn-hunting gear
  - Riding, feeding, grooming, or hugging unicorn friends
  - Providing tips on how to hunt unicorns
  - Revealing details of unicorn sightings
  - Regaling us with stories of unicorn hunting adventures
- When forwarding your message, please indicate if we have permission to share such photos and related material across LSSU social media and other platforms. If you prefer that we don't, we promise that we will not. (For instance, we understand why adults would want to protect the privacy of children.) We do still ask for at least the photo for LSSU to keep in its internal archives.

- Send to marketing@lssu.edu

Or to

Department of Natural Unicorns
Lake Superior State University
c/o Marketing & Communications
650 W. Easterday Ave.
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

LAKE SUPERIOR STATE UNIVERSITY
lssu.edu/unicornhunters

Yoga Pose of the Week

with Austeen Freeman

Warrior 2 or Virabhadrasana 2

Feeling low energy? Feeling defeated? Warrior 2 can be a stimulating pose. The feet are perpendicular to each other sitting on one long line. The hips are reaching toward the long edge of the mat and the front knee is reaching toward the front pinky toe. The shoulders are resting over the hips and the arms are stretching in opposite directions. The neck is long and the gaze is focused over that front middle finger.

Warrior 2 calls in concentration, focus, and fierceness. It asks you to root through the ground but also extend in all the directions, asking you to take up as much space as you can. Call in your internal warrior by practicing the shape of warrior 2 for 30 seconds each side.

Learn more about Austeen and Free To Be Yoga and Massage on her website at Austeenfreeman.com.

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Ann Arbor Holistic Resource Guide

Since 1982, Crazy Wisdom has served as a regional resource for information in the areas of holistic health and integrative medicine, bodymind therapies, psychology and personal growth, Buddhism, spiritual development, and consciousness.

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The Crazy Wisdom weekly Calendar

Book Discussion Groups

Dine and Discuss Distantly • Wednesday, Feb. 24 • 7 p.m. • We will be reading: The Words of My Father by Yousef Bashir. Create your own discussion group. Tune in to view a group discussion and a presentation by Linda Tomala. Registration required for video link. $10 for book and postage. Discussion is free. Contact 517-266-4000, or www.webercenter.org.

Channeling

Remembering Wholeness via Zoom with The Mother channeled by Barbara Brodsky • Sunday, Feb. 14 • 2 p.m. • Energy sharing (darshan) with The Mother channeled through Barbara Brodsky. Darshan is an event in consciousness: The powerful energy of The Mother gets transmitted as she looks directly at each person through the camera. Number of participants limited; register early. $10-25. Contact at 477-5848; om@deepspring.org or deepspring.org.

Evenings with Aaron channeled by Barbara Brodsky • Wednesdays, Feb. 17 • 7 p.m. • An open session with Barbara Brodsky channeling Aaron. Talk followed by Q&A. All welcome; no registration necessary. Aaron will speak about spiritual practices such as Vipassana (Insight) and Pure Awareness meditation; how to work with inner guidance; and how to support changes in our physical/spiritual bodies through work with body energy, the elements, sound, and an open heart. $10-35. Contact at 477-5848; om@deepspring.org or deepspring.org.

Life Transitions

Helpful Legal Tips for Every Stage of Life with Elizabeth Hurwitz • Saturdays, Feb. 13, Mar. 13, Apr. 10 • 11 p.m. • Useful legal information for every stage of your life and the lives of your loved ones. Question and answer period and group discussion time included. The workshop will take place via Zoom. Please email Elizabeth to obtain the Zoom link at elizabethwhurwitz@gmail.com. Free. Contact Elizabeth at 657-0835; elizabethwhurwitz@gmail.com or hurwitzlawoffices.com.

Love and Relationships

Creating Your Ideal Mate with Karen Greenberg • Sunday, Feb. 14 • 1 p.m. • Identify your Ideal Mate's qualities (as I did so to manifest my mate of over two decades) and enhance these with the richness of the group input. Learn how to use ceremony, meditation, chanting, movement, fragrances, essences, elixirs, herbs, flowers, colors, shapes, metals, altars with sacred symbols, Archetypal images, and candles. Learn to work to remove blockages, to work through fears and "deserving" issues, and to trust the Divine Order and Timing! $125. Contact Karen at 417-9511; krngrnbg@gmail.com or www.clair-ascension.com/.

Living Love Project with Michael Oliver • Sundays • 11 a.m. • Learn about living and sharing love in fun, achievable ways... using wooden hearts to share world-wide. Free. Contact Michael at 313-819-7567; michael@mindtation.com or mindtation.com.

Meditation

Nature Bath with Amanda Anastasia • Sunday, Feb. 21st • 11 a.m. • Soak in the high-vibration, healing energies of nature as we collectively engage in a guided meditative immersion that will bring you back home to all that you are. Led by Amanda Anastasia, yoga instructor and joy coach. Dress for the weather and look forward to feeling refreshed by the loving, warming connections we will make with all your relations - earth, wind, air and fire. Please contact Amanda to register at least three hours prior to the event. We will be meeting in various locations in Ann Arbor. Details will be emailed closer to the date. Approx. one-two hour workshop. Sliding scale fee: $33-$77. Contact Amanda at amahessling@gmail.com or www.joypriestess.com.

Weekly Meditation via Zoom • Sun. & Tues. • 11:00:00 AM • Offering the opportunity to meditate online every Sunday and Tuesday morning with others from far and near. Sunday at 11:00 am to 12 noon and Tuesday at 9:00 am. Eastern time. Contact Tana at om@deepspring.org for more information or visit deepspring.org.

Shamanism

Spirit Gardens with Judy Ramsey • Saturday, Feb. 20 • 9 a.m. • Join us to brighten winter doldrums. In this one-day workshop, learn how to manifest your dreams through shamanic gardening. You will learn how to "plant" your ideas and goals so that they grow into beautiful realities in your life. Knowledge of journeying is required. Fun is guaranteed. $75/person. Contact Judy at 517-480-4513; ramsey.judy003@yahoo.com or visit JudyRamsey.net

Spiritual Development

Christian Mercy and Our American Prison System with the Weber Center • Thursday, Feb. 18 • 7 p.m. • A look at our

American Prison System through the Eyes of Christian Mercy and Ethics. Free and open to all. Contact the Weber Center at 517-266-4000 or www.webercenter.org.

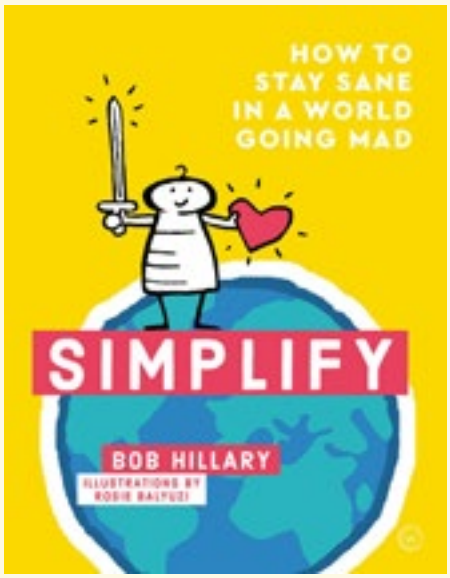
Yoga

Valentine's Day Partner Yoga • Sunday, Feb. 14 • 6 p.m. • Virtual partner yoga class via Zoom! Fun and romantic too. Esther and her partner Dave will demonstrate each pose. Any kind of partners are welcome, no yoga experience required. Tickets are $20 per pair until Feb 7 then $25. Contact Esther with any questions at Esther@esthersyoga.com. Register on at https://linktr.ee/esthersyoga.

Get your calendar listings in by Monday morning at 10 A.M. for the next Crazy Wisdom Weekly Issue!
Send your listing in here.

Artwork by Jennifer Carson

Crazy Wisdom Book Pick of the Week



Simplify: How To Stay Sane in a World Going Mad by Bob Hilary

How can we live more simply, learn to appreciate what we have and root our way of being in the Earth we have inherited? By living simply and becoming an Earth Warrior. As life keeps urging us to go faster, many of us are moving in the opposite direction... we are looking for SLOWNESS, for stillness, to live more natural, less complex lives.

Bob Hillary spent a year living off grid, an experience that taught him how to live simply. This meant downscaling, re-wilding, un-teching and finding and doing things that are free. These philosophies provided a framework for the 21 practices he shares in this book. They range from letting stillness be your friend to learning to say 'no' and practising gratitude, and they offer fun and practical ways for you to start making simple living part of your everyday life.

Bob also looks at the crucial process of self-healing, which needs to take place so that you can fully embrace the book's closing section on action - how best to take the simple living message out into the world. This is a manual for modern times, teaching us how to be Earth Warriors and live in a more joyful, positive, meaningfully and above all simple way. It is guide to creating positive action, to walking the right path and making the right choices.

Purchase your copy of *Simplify* at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore.

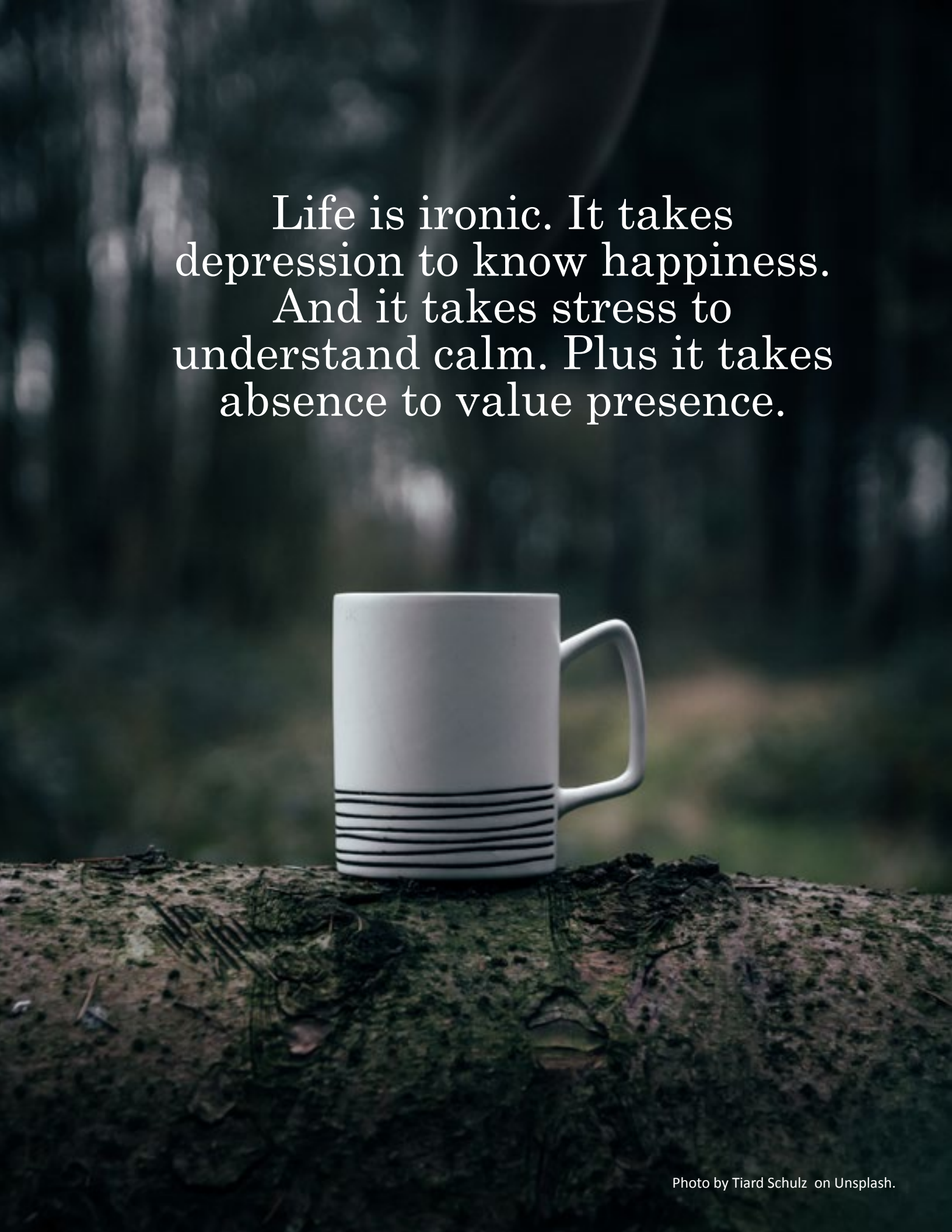

Life is ironic. It takes depression to know happiness. And it takes stress to understand calm. Plus it takes absence to value presence.

Photo by Tiard Schulz on Unsplash.